



## News Release

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Influenza Activity Increasing in Utah**

#### *Flu Vaccine is Still Available*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – According to the Utah Department of Health (UDOH), influenza activity is rapidly increasing statewide in Utah. Influenza activity refers to the number of people who are ill with influenza-like illness. This is the most activity seen in recent years, except for the 2005-2006 influenza season.

In the past week, 92 additional influenza-associated hospitalizations were reported in Utah. Some of these did occur during previous weeks because of reporting delays. This brings the state total for the 2007-2008 season up to 220 influenza-associated hospitalizations, compared to 143 at this time last year.

The majority of influenza-associated hospitalizations this season are in individuals considered at higher risk for influenza-related complications, such as: adults 65 years of age and older, children under 5 years of age and adults & children with serious medical conditions.

Despite the fact that this year's vaccine has a less-than-ideal match to some of the circulating influenza strains, public health officials continue to recommend the vaccination. The vaccine provides some protection against related strains and reduces the risk for influenza-related complications and deaths.

Influenza vaccine is still available and is recommended for individuals in higher risk groups and for anyone who wants to protect themselves from becoming infected with

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influenza. It takes about two weeks to develop protection after vaccination. Antiviral medications may be appropriate to protect high risk individuals who can't be vaccinated or while waiting the two weeks before the vaccine takes effect. Visit Utah's Influenza Vaccine Locator website at [www.immunize-utah.org/apps/flu/index.php](http://www.immunize-utah.org/apps/flu/index.php) or call your local health department to find a vaccine clinic near you.

While vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza, it is important for everyone to do their part in preventing infection. This includes:

- Staying home when you are sick,
- Covering your cough or sneeze with your elbow or disposable tissue, and
- Washing your hands with soap and hot water.

Current influenza activity and other information such as vaccine recommendations and disease facts are available by visiting the UDOH influenza web page at <http://health.utah.gov/epi/diseases/flu/>.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*